

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A timing device for visually determining the passage of a preselected period of time comprising:

a redox indicator deposited within a matrix and in combination with a metal ion, such that over a period of time during exposure to air, the redox indicator changes color and thereby indicates the passage of a predetermined period of time.

2. The timing device of Claim 1 wherein the matrix is a film-forming polymer.

3. The film-forming polymer of claim 2 wherein the polymer is a cellulose derivative.

4. The film-forming polymer of Claim 2 having a thickness based on the wet film of from 5 to 50 mil.

5. The matrix of Claim 1 wherein the matrix is attached to an adhesive tape and is adhered to a package containing a consumer product.

6. The timing device of Claim 1 wherein the redox indicator is selected from the group consisting of indigo carmine and methylene blue.

7. The timing device of Claim 1 wherein the metal ion is Sn^{2+} .

8. A method for determining when a consumer product has reached an end to its useful shelflife comprising:

a. preparing a timing device comprising a redox indicator within a matrix which also contains a metal ion capable of oxidizing the redox indicator;

b. attaching the timing device to an outside surface of the consumer product;

- c. observing the timing device for color changes, which color changes coincide with the end of the useful shelflife of the said consumer product.